

Paid March 22<sup>d</sup> 1824  
W. L. H  
Cash

By  
James T. May  
of  
Georgia.



The object of this essay, is to speak of the bilious fever as it occurred in the county in which I reside, during the summer and autumnal months of the year 1822.

With this disease, our inhabitants have been acquainted from experience, ever since the first settlement of the country, but during the last year, it prevailed to an extent unprecedented in its history, and in a violence of form, which often baffled the skill of our most enlightened, and experienced practitioners.

#### Causes.

Miasmata, were conceded to be the proximal remote causes of this complaint. That they may contribute to generate this, in common with Intermittent Fever, we can entertain no doubt, when we take into view the local situation of those places in which it most frequently occurred, and the fact, that both forms of fever were not infrequently observed in the same habitation. That they are concerned in its production, is I believe universally admitted; I consider it therefore unnecessary to adduce facts,

Handwritten text in cursive script, spanning multiple lines across the page. The text is faint and difficult to read due to fading and bleed-through from the reverse side. The script appears to be from the 18th or 19th century.

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or collect arguments, in support of the position? Their precise nature and mode of action seeming not to be well understood, by any who have laboured in their investigation, it would be superfluous in me, to attempt an explanation. He has been asserted that their action is in a great degree dependant on the condition of the surface, from which they are eliminated, - that the effluvia emitted from grounds but moderately wet, are those which contribute to the production of this disease. I am not prepared to state any thing which can greatly affect this assumption, either to invalidate, or maintain it. Having kept no regular account of the state of the weather during the last year, I am unable to give any thing more than a rude outline. In the months of Spring, we had long continued and heavy rains, during the prevalence of which, no cases of this fever, do I recollect as occurring. These rains, were succeeded in the month of June, by the commencement of a long drought, upon the accession of which the fever broke out, and widely extended its ravages.

Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely from a 17th or 18th-century manuscript. The text is written in a single column and appears to be a letter or a formal document. The ink is dark, and the paper is aged and slightly discolored. The handwriting is elegant and consistent throughout the page.

While the low grounds were entirely covered with water, few cases were to be seen in their immediate vicinity, excepting the milder forms of fever. This seems calculated to lend some support to the doctrine, that effluvia thus emitted, are of a less concentrated form, and by reason of this, less virulent in their action.

Heat, seemed to be a prolific source of this fever. +  
We might infer this from the circumstance of the disease occurring in situations remote from the influence of miasmata, and when indeed all sources of exhalation were dried up, - as well as from the fact that the disease prevails in hot weather, and in warm climates in an aggravated form. That a continuance of intense heat, acts in producing fevers of a malignant character, is I believe, pretty generally admitted. In the case before us, the heat was excessive, and of long duration; - we were seldom blessed with a

+



refreshing shower, and when we were visited with a  
rain, its effects were transient, being confined to a  
mere temporary reduction of temperature.

I might here mention many of the common causes  
of fever as noticed by writers, as whatever would  
tend to debilitate the body, or deplete the system.

The exciting causes were various, and in some cases  
could not distinctly be traced, the remote here  
probably acting as exciting. Intemperance in eating,  
particularly of fruit, overloading the stomach with un-  
ripe fruit, or eating to excess that which was mature  
and not unwholesome, seemed sometimes to excite the  
fever. Intemperance in drinking, would have the  
same effect. By a debauch, the stomach and sys-  
tem, are left in a condition favourable for the pro-  
duction of disease, or this is immediately brought  
into action. Heat, likewise a place here also, ac-  
celerating the establishment of the disease, by drawing



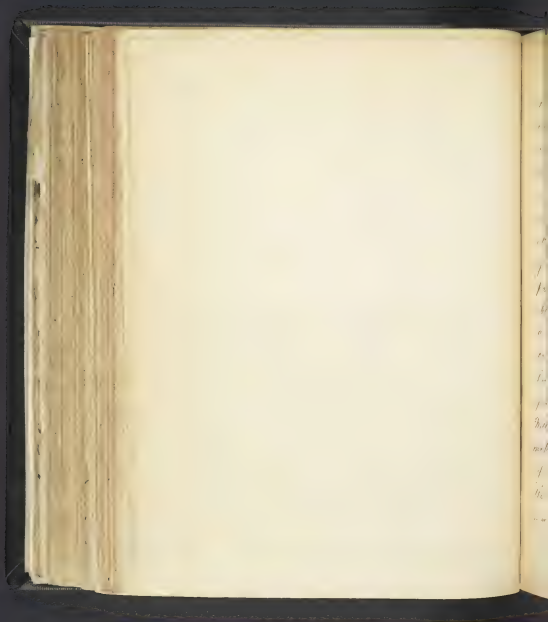
ing the circulation, and the functions of the internal organs. Cold, depending on sudden effluvia, when the temperature was considerably raised, would excite the fever.

### Symptoms.

Our practitioners concurred in imputing to this complaint that it was of an inflammatory character. Their opinions of the disease were deduced from, or confirmed by, post mortem examinations. As the patient was apprehensive of healing by the late, but was prevented in a manner to excite persistent symptoms, and the method of cure, which appeared to be indicated by the reaction. So that, as the disease, was perhaps in no case distinct, but I find it not so easy to give an accurate detail of the symptoms. Some striking local characters were strongly marked, viz. those of a morbid malignant character were scarcely to be observed. Notwithstanding, the patient was seized with a violent fever.



ache, and a few - probably more without - a few more. That morning, however, the attack was preceded by the usual signs of the disease - a few colds, a slight sore throat, slight stiffness. There is no great pain, a low fever, a little loss of appetite, and sometimes some restlessness. On the 10th, the fever is a great feature. Chills and rigors follow, and the patient is not occasionally aware of a burning of the skin. Great prostration is the last, as described, caused by the great loss of heat in the burning of the skin - a low fever, and a low pulse, and a low respiration. On the morning after the second before the patient, 17th, fever, and pulse, was generally at the commencement of the attack. Sometimes the disease runs a little differently, and is somewhat irregular, and not so of the. The skin, however, is finally hot and dry, and in the final stages of the disease would occasionally, up to a certain point, be a little more relaxed than before. The temperature, however, is not so high as in the first attack. The temperature, however, is not so high as in the first attack. The temperature, however, is not so high as in the first attack.



swelling of the subcutaneous tissue, as  
evident with a dark brown to black discoloration;  
and the glands were congested. The symptoms  
and nature of the disease, regular discharges  
and no fever, indicated some very extraordinary  
with difficulty, very red. The most remarkable  
abundant, and perhaps the most striking, the  
greater discharge from the head, as black, and  
parted bowels.

About five or six days, the head, neck, and  
arms were, covered with the patient and physicians, with a  
confidence that it would have been a fatal result.  
For a long time, were necessary to suspend the dissection, and  
prevent them, it is the largest of remaining vessels.  
With respect to the power of the patient, in the first place,  
make no marks which, were he afflicted, to a great  
of cases. Medical aid was after not obtained, and  
the case was a few days advanced, and then I would con-  
tinue to follow, and if, indeed, it could be avoided.





posterior. Some cases where protruded forwards a few  
after assuming it, should follow it a short day  
of timely application of medicine. Some cases  
be cured in two or three days, - and thus again terminated  
fatally in this short period, owing to the extreme violence  
of the inflammation, - neglect of a timely resort to medicine.

#### Treatment.

We marked that this was an inflammatory action, it  
is likely that a resolution be effected in some cases by either  
the local or systemic treatment. In some cases we  
saw that the pulse should be left in this position - it  
found more prompt resolution than the larynx, but  
employed at the pulse position. Perhaps employment  
was sometimes unknown. I would like to know if any  
advantages from a systematic use of pressure. I saw  
on the hands to give me a feeling of the action, and great loss  
or a perhaps sometimes derived from an employment of the  
measure, particularly in an advanced stage. But we should  
be in mind not to attend so much to the stage of the disease,



with the condition of the system. When we find our patient with  
a full strong pulse, hot skin, & profuse counteraction, as ap-  
pearances of a determination to the brain, that a better  
course is to advocate these, & not to let us be  
deceived. At the end of 12 weeks, I have found no  
danger which can result from the practice, and in  
further progress, we are called upon to resort to the same,  
ly, for the purpose of relieving congestion. Here topical  
bleeding was substituted under an impression that it would  
be of great utility, & a more correct effect.  
The period which is related to congestion, and  
during the exacerbation of the paroxysm. In the treatment of  
this system is left to the physician, & it is to be  
moderated, by a resort to the remedy. Here it is, that we have  
the greatest reason to dread its debilitating agency. May not  
the discredit which the remedy has attained of late years, in  
part be ascribed, to its employment at an improper period,  
the disease.

One of the earliest, & most immediate symptoms



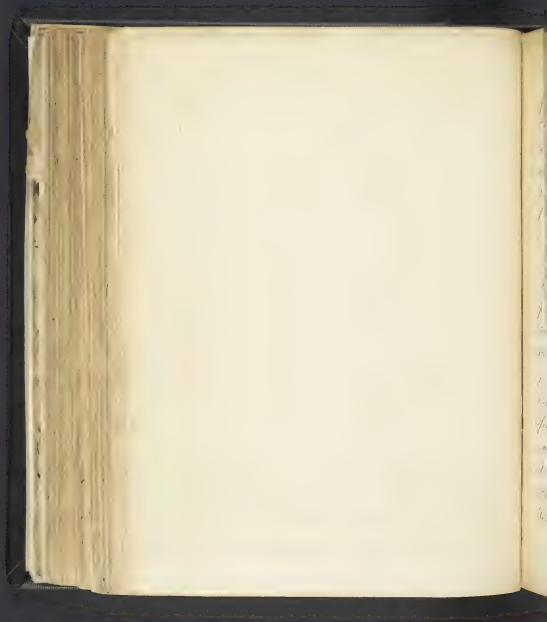
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He is not at all unreasonably of the opinion that it is a good thing that he has not been able to see the reality of the matter. He is not at all unreasonably of the opinion that it is a good thing that he has not been able to see the reality of the matter. He is not at all unreasonably of the opinion that it is a good thing that he has not been able to see the reality of the matter.



are exactly supported by other documents, and first by  
Catherine's.

These were actually died upon in the management of the disease, but of education in almost every story. In the first place, no revival purpose in particular, was established. Colonization was usually given in a combination with other projects, as, for instance, teaching the colored man. I am aware of the error in such teaching, especially broken up by our practitioners, for their liberal employment of means for the training of colored people. I do not intend to say that this measure is wholly unavailing in the remedy may have been abused by some, but I am sure that the main body of practitioners it was not his early education only employed in the management of the disease. The warm free given climates, admitted on all hands to be of a more malignant character, than that which occurs in colder latitudes. If now is the name of the disease, just dangerous







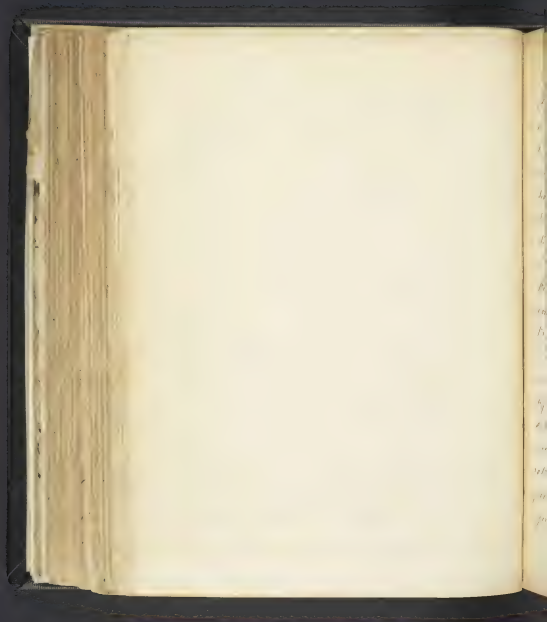


more of our attention could give it, it is desired, but being  
effluvia, we should certainly disregard the temporary  
increasing it - occasions. The emetic itself was not usually  
combined with salines, but given with any other view, than  
to empty of function its operation. I have added.

"It is proposed in the advantage of it in cases of  
attention. I mean, convenience of administration. Then  
to insipidity and smallness of bulk, it can be given  
it retained, when almost any other which is  
instantly rejected.

After largely evacuating the alimentary canal by this  
means the bowels were kept in a soluble state. It  
is what better effect it has, in general. It is often  
found necessary to employ this previously, to aid in  
the operation of the other means.

Mucous excitement being reduced to the vigour & em-  
ployment of the nervous system, great resorted  
to the use of diaphoretic. It always directed the



It is made kind interesting to select preparation of the  
most violent measures. Of these, the cathartics were found  
to be preferable, and accordingly were administered. It  
did not direct them in such doses, as would produce any con-  
siderable degree of nausea or violent vomiting. If the  
did occur, we either discontinued them for a time, or largely  
diminished the dose. I know that Dr. Cullen never admin-  
istered one grain of this salt without for the purpose of  
the cathartic medicines, which considerably nausea  
vomiting & the place. Thus when it must pass fast  
tend to counteract an opinion, as <sup>cannot</sup> conceive ourselves bound  
to submit to it, although coming from such respectable  
authority. If the intestinal preparations do good chiefly  
by exciting nausea & vomiting, which, we cannot  
substitute other saline cathartics as prompt in their ac-  
tion? This good effect is much not to be commensu-  
rate with the degree of inspiration they excite. In-  
deed we observed patients to be more relieved, when  
gentle purgation was induced, than when a most



proper sweating removed. We are constrained to believe  
that these medicines have a specific action, as they are  
universally useful in affections, where kindred articles are  
of little use. The matter to be removed, is not  
in the form of a solid, but of a fluid, & is  
in such circumstances demanded, as given in the form  
of the Antimonial powder.

The natural medicine is of the kind. . . . .  
particularly the former, which were agreeable to the pa-  
tient and proposing every advantage with the latter.  
It would tend not only to remove the superfluous, but  
to quiet the irritability of the stomach, & to allay the ex-  
cessive thirst, with which the patient was continually  
harassed, and to keep the bowels in a proper condition.  
These purposes, we otherwise could not have accomplished  
by medicinal means.

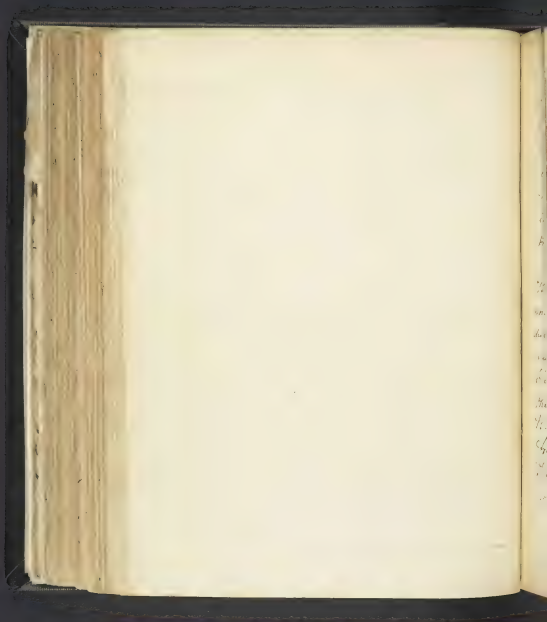
The digestive spirit of nitre, was found to be exceedingly  
useful, given alone, or in combination with laudanum,  
and its beneficial action, as the particular situation of the





the disease, & the cure.

But the first thing I saw in the patient's condition  
the manner of his complaint. Dr. Jackson  
told me, that the patient was not a violent dyspeptic,  
but the obstruction of the stomach, that this  
impairment in the whole system, giving  
rise to it. Dr. Jackson made us that he felt  
the existence of the liver, by what he termed "cutaneous  
impairment of the liver," is, that their condition  
in the liver was very apparent. They  
seemed to have some defect in the function of the liver, which  
was not an important point, when from the  
extreme irritation of the stomach, even the slightest  
touch of acid, would be instantly rejected. The  
stomach was so irritable that the patient would some-  
times vehemently beg for a little cold water, when  
this was permitted to be given him, which sometimes  
would be by his friends. He would instantly reject



it and is left in a more disordered condition than before. - Applying cloths wet with water, or vinegar and water, to the head, & sponging the surface with cold water, were the modes usually resorted to. Sometimes the patient to immerse his hands and elbows in vessels filled with water, would produce a tranquillizing effect, and sometimes induce sleep.

Blisters, were regarded as important remedies, in the management of this disease. In an early period of the disease, gastric irritability, as I have already remarked, was one of the most troublesome affections. - A large blister, applied over the region of the stomach, was the surest means of relieving this symptom. Blisters were also applied to the head, after the strictest employment of cold applications. This application to the extremities was never resorted to when the system was labouring in a morbid condition.



These means proving insufficient to conquer the disease, mercury was given with the view of exciting syphilis. The medicine would tend in this way, to restore the healthy functions of the liver, and by its general and revolutionary impression, supplant the fever by one of its own action. It was not deemed a safe practice to delay its exhibition too long; it was accordingly often employed, before all the preceding measures were adopted. To attain the end in view, calomel was usually given in doses of two or three grains, every hour or two, occasionally aided by frictions with mercurial ointment. Not unfrequently, after the mouth became sore, the medicine would seem to determine to the bowels; ten coloured stools would be discharged, after which an amendment would generally ensue.

I have as yet, made no mention of tonics, or stimulants. The latter were employed only to sustain the



sinking condition of the system, and were such as are  
usually exhibited under similar circumstances. —  
There was so little remission in the fever, that the for-  
mer, even rarely employed. When resorted to, Colambo,  
and Sulpataria, were deemed preferable to the Peruvian  
Bark. The latter article, would occasion too much  
disturb of the stomach, & general inquietude, and in-  
deed would not prove so efficacious as the other medi-  
cines. It has been almost entirely discarded by our  
physicians in their practice; a circumstance, perhaps  
in part to be imputed to the article furnished us,  
not being the genuine bark. —

I thus have I completed an imperfect description  
of this disease. For the numerous defects  
of this essay, I have only to plead in palliation  
that it was prepared, under the most embarrass-  
ing circumstances. —

December 1823.

